GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3008
ANSWERED ON:13.08.2003
SOCIAL HEALTH INSURANCE SYSTEM
DR. KIRIT SOMAIYA

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the benefits of social security and social Health Insurance System to the common man in the country;

(b) whether the Government are aware of the lack of development of Social Health Insurance System in India;

(c) if so, whether in countries like Japan, Korea etc. people are fully covered while in India there is coverage of only 22 per cent population;

(d) if so, whether the Ministry of Health has made any efforts or prepared any plan and coordinated study in this regard with the help of other ministries;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the corrective measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SMT. SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(a)to(f): Keeping in view the benefits of social security and social health insurance to the common man and to provide an impetus to development of social health insurance system in India the public sector general insurance companies were encouraged in Union Budget 2003 to design a community based universal health insurance scheme during 2003-04.

In this context the General Insurers (public sector) Association of India (GIPSA) companies namely National Insurance, New India Assurance, Oriental Insurance and United India Insurance have launched a community based health insurance scheme which offers health insurance coverage to common man at a cost of Rs.365 per annum per individual for a sum ensured of Rs.30,000/-. The said policy is available on floater basis for families upto five in numbers @ Rs.548 per annum and for families seven in numbers @Rs.730/- per annum. In addition, the Life Insurance Corporation has introduced Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana (Government subsidized scheme with 9% per annum assured returns for citizens aged 55 and above). This scheme entitles the beneficiaries to pension through his/her life time and in the event of unfortunate death of the pensioner, purchase price is returned to the nominee. The minimum pension is Rs.250/- per month and maximum pension is Rs.2000/- per month.

While the details of insurance coverage in Japan, Korea etc. are not readily available, it is a fact that the health insurance covers approx. only 22% of India`s population. It is in this context that both, the National Health Policy 2002 and the National Population Policy 2000 place emphasis on health insurance. In addition, the passing of Insurance Regulatory Development Authority (IRDA) Bill has also paved the way for the entry of private health insurance companies.

In addition, Social security benefits for the dis-advantaged groups can be availed of under the provisions of the Maternity Benefit Amendment Act 1995, Workmens Compensation (Amendment) Act 1984, Plantation Labour Act 1951, Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act 1946, Beedi Workers Welfare Fund Act 1976and Building and other construction workers (regulation of employment and conditions of service)Act, 1996.